



Lesson 13.1: Tourists in New Hampshire

“White Mountain Chronicles: The Willey Slide of August 1826”

From *The Conway Daily Sun*, Sep 2, 2016

Story originally published in *The White Mountain Chronicles* by Steve Eastman, August 1979

Some parts of the story have been edited to make it easier for you to read.

Many tragedies have occurred in the years since Aug. 28, 1826 in the White Mountains, but none has equaled the fate that befell Polly and Samuel Willey Jr., their five children and two hired men on that stormy Monday 190 summers ago, when mountains moved, the Saco River swelled and the family perished.

Considering the harsh conditions and isolation of their cabin, it is hard to understand what led the Willeys to leave the security of their North Conway farm to move into the run-down, 1793-built cabin in October 1825. Their nearest neighbors were miles away.

The summer drought ended the morning of Aug. 28, 1826, with one of the heaviest downpours ever to strike the White Mountains ... The rain lasted until midnight. Then, as suddenly as it developed, the storm cleared.



The Willey Family consisted of 9 persons. Capt. Willey, his wife and children, and two men by names of Nickerson & Allen. All were buried beneath an avalanche or slide from the mountains attended by the awful calamity of the destruction of a whole family, on the 28th of August, A.D. 1826.

The Willey Slide, 1854

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



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In the valley, Benjamin, Samuel Willey's brother, noted the destruction that had occurred overnight from the huge flood and earth slide, with uprooted trees, displaced rocks and gouged tracks where the water had flowed ...

He reached the Willey House about dark; the structure was untouched but deserted. But the barn in back was destroyed by the slide and two horses were dead.

Inside, he found the house in disorder, with clothing and belongings scattered. On a table lay the Bible, opened to the 18th Psalm, which reads, "The Lord thundered in the heavens ... Then the channels of water were seen, and the foundations of the world were discovered at thy rebuke."

... Word soon spread all over the valley, and in late afternoon, parties of searchers began to converge at the house.

On Thursday the 31st, the searchers finally found the bodies of Polly and Samuel Willey, along with the hired man, David Allen, and the youngest child under a pile of floodwood. Eventually, bodies of some of the children were recovered, but it was assumed the rest were swept away by the rain-swelled river ...

The house was left standing because the slide ... uncovered a huge boulder on the slope above the house so the rush of water and mountain debris made channels on each side of the rock tumbling down around either side of the house.

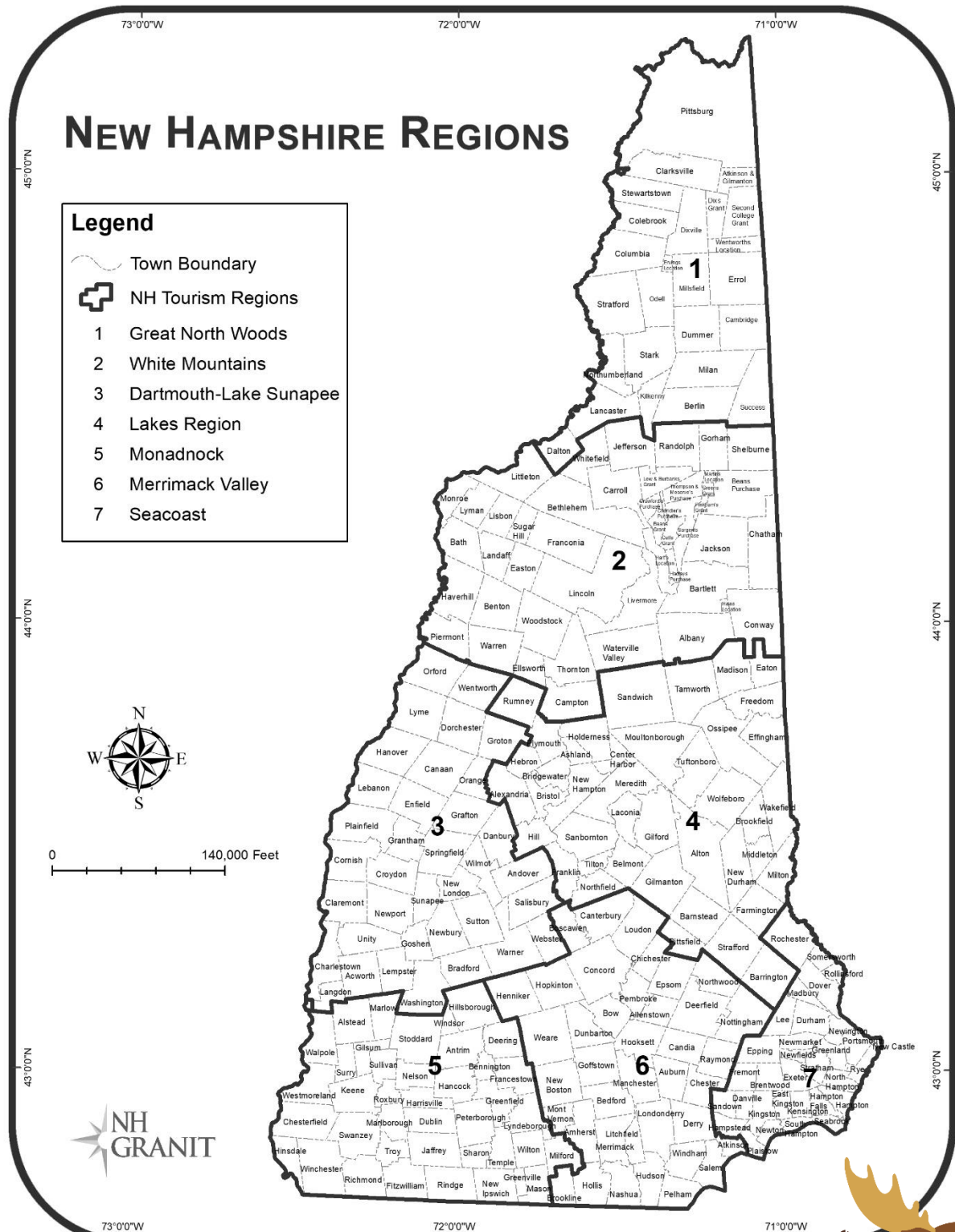
The news of the tragedy spread far and wide, and became one of the first early tourist draws, as no visit to the White Mountains was complete during the golden era of the grand hotels of the 19th century without a carriage ride to the site ...

Today, the state maintains a visitor area at the Willey site in Crawford Notch State Park. The Appalachian Mountain Club's Crawford Depot at the Highland Center also contains many historical exhibits on local history, including about the Willey Slide.



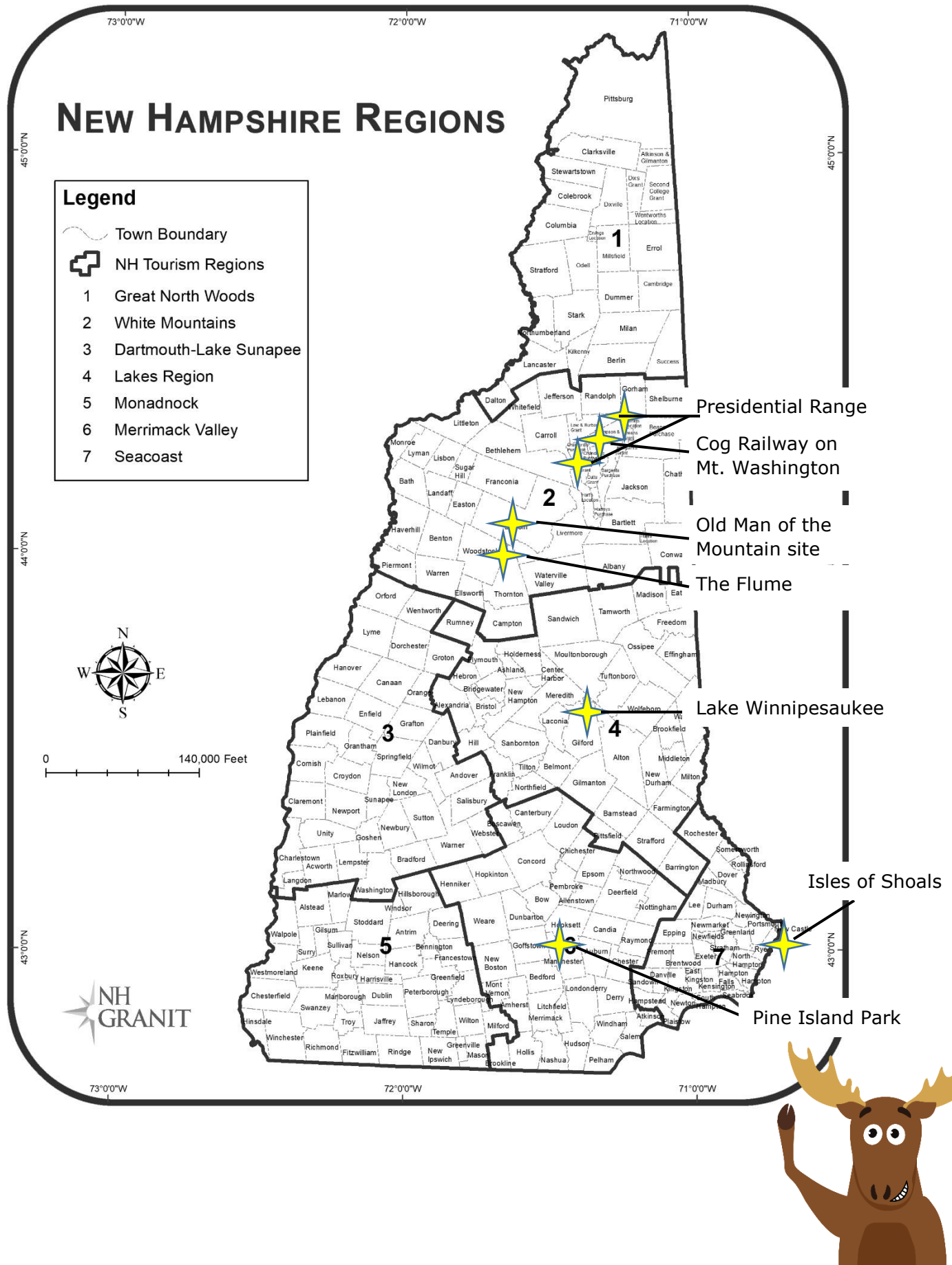
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Name _____





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Name_____

Reasons to Visit New Hampshire

Directions: As you encounter and investigate the images around the classroom, add them to one or more of the categories.

Isles of Shoals:	Old Man of the Mountain:	Flume:	Pine Island Park:
Lake Winnepesaukee:	Cog Railway:	Mount Washington & Presidential Range:	

Natural Beauty	Amusement	Activity (ex. hiking, skiing, camping)	Education/ History	Relaxation

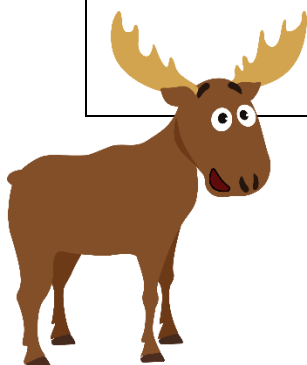


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Reflection

1. What about New Hampshire attracts tourists from all over the United States? Give two examples from the activity to back up your reasoning.

2. Do you think the main attractions of New Hampshire change over time? Why or why not?



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Mount Washington Cog Railway at Jacob's Ladder, circa 1892–1906

An inventor named Sylvester Marsh loved the views from the top of Mount Washington, but he thought there must be an easier way to get to the top than climbing up 6,000 feet. He developed a special kind of train, called the Mount Washington Cog Railway, that could climb such a steep terrain. The Cog Railway uses gears to pull the train up the side of the mountain. It also has special brakes that keep the train from coming back down the mountain too fast. This photo shows the Cog Railway at Jacob's Ladder, the steepest point of the route.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



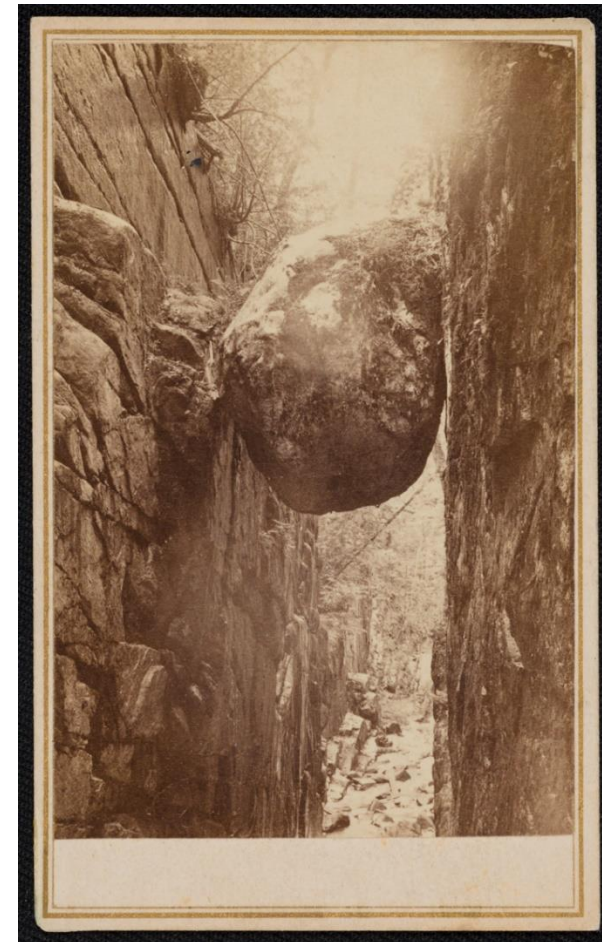
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The Flume, 1917

The Flume was discovered in Franconia Notch in 1808 by 93-year-old "Aunt" Jess Guernsey when she accidentally came upon it while fishing. It is now a popular hiking spot in the White Mountains.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Suspended Boulder at the Flume, circa 1850s–1883

This is a picture of the suspended boulder at the Flume, a gorge that rises 800 feet in Franconia Notch. In 1883 a heavy rainstorm created a landslide that wiped the boulder away. It has never been found.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



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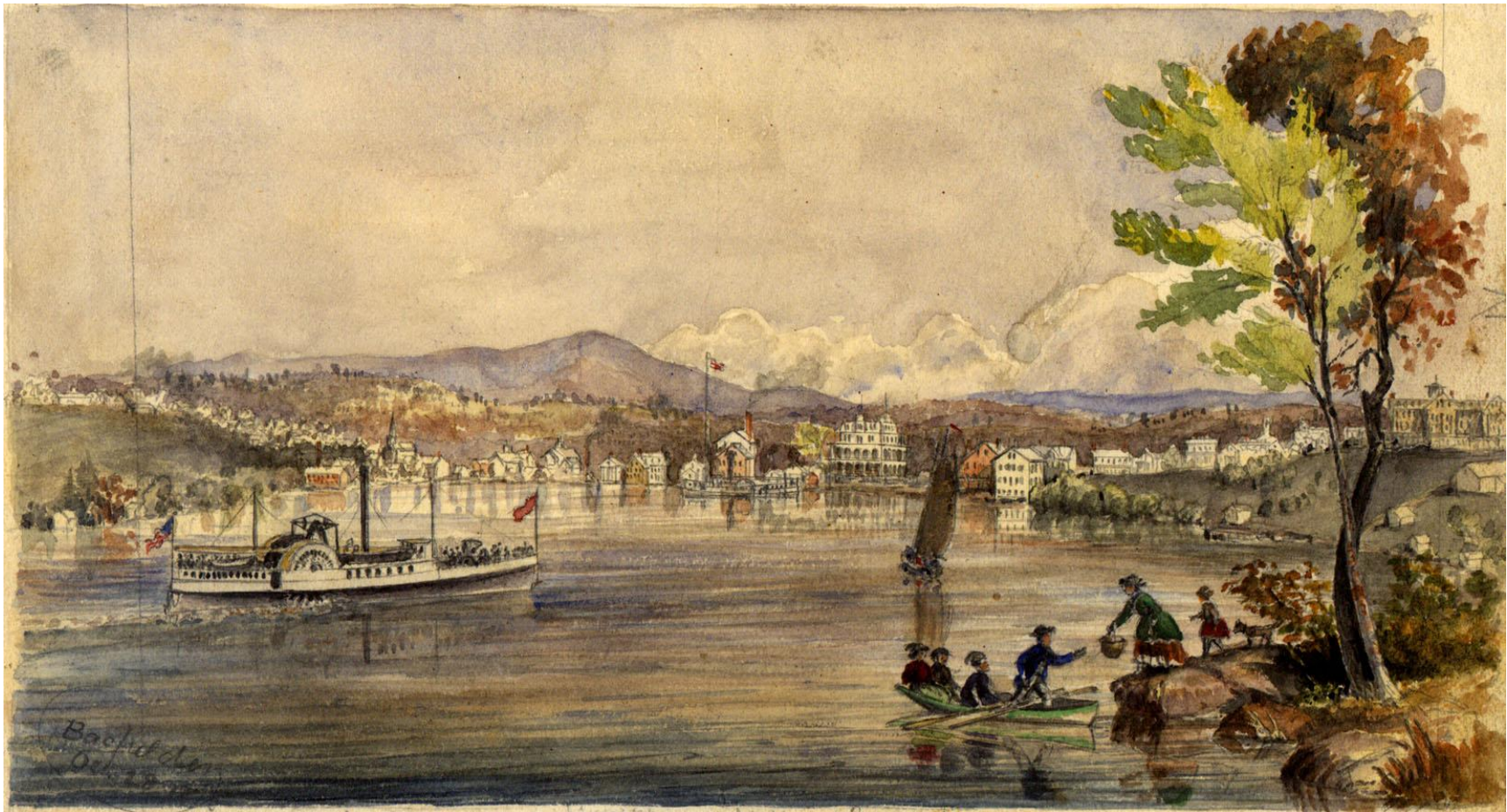
Appledore Island Boat Landing, undated

Appledore Island is one of nine islands about seven miles off the coast of New Hampshire. The hotel burned down in 1914, and the island today has the Shoals Marine Laboratory, run by two universities.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



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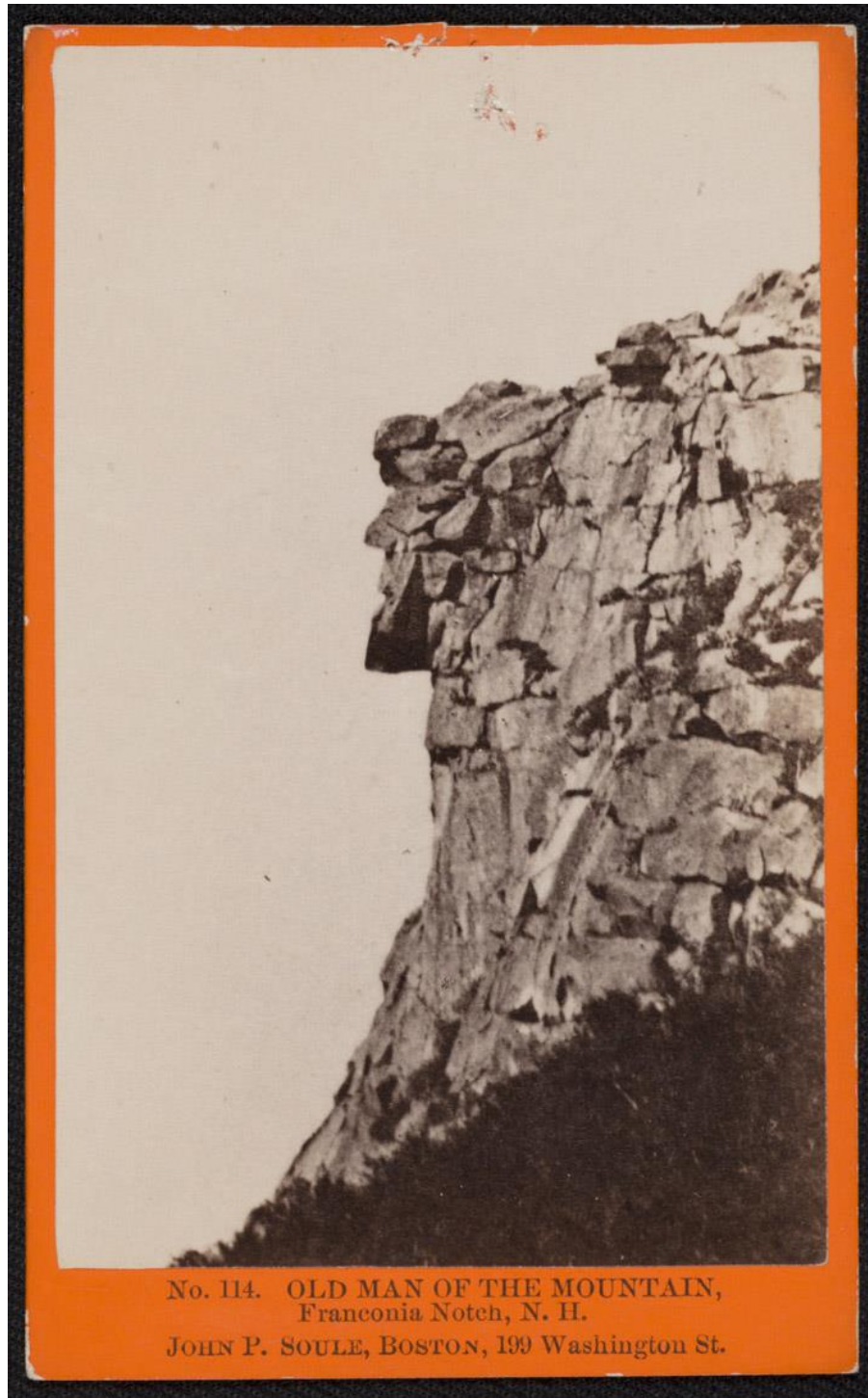
Wolfeboro Town on Lake Winnepesaukee, 1873

Wolfeboro's town motto is "The Oldest Summer Resort in America" and it has been a popular tourist site for more than 150 years.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



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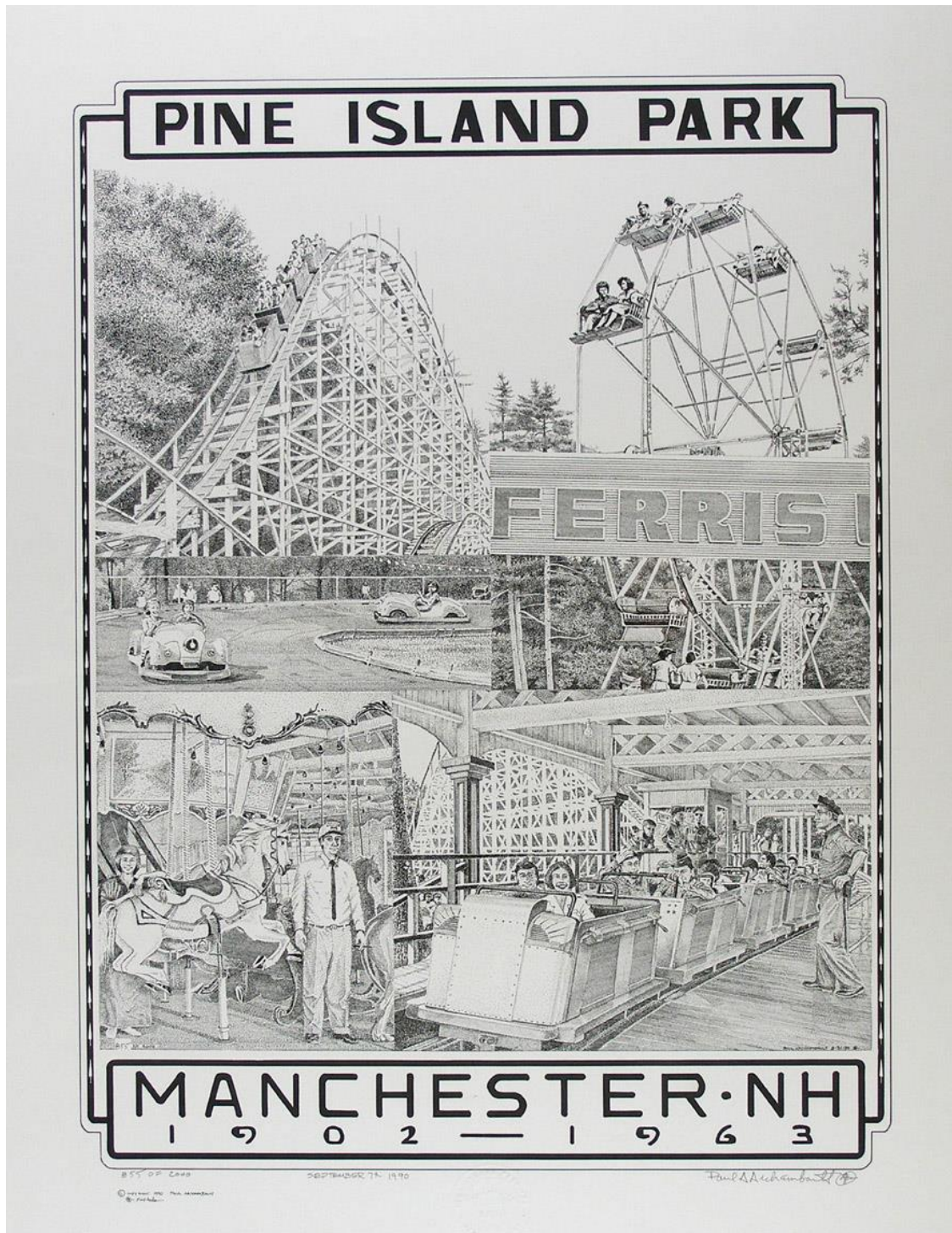
Old Man of the Mountain Carte de Visite, circa 1850s–1904

Carte de visite photographs were a nineteenth-century innovation for sharing photographs. Small photographic prints were mounted on heavy paper cards that typically measured 2 inches by 4 inches. They were inexpensive and could safely travel through the mail.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



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Pine Island Park, 1902–1962

Pine Island Park operated from 1902 to 1962 in Manchester. It attracted people as far away as Boston, and a trolley car line ran out from Manchester to the amusement park.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



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Presidential Range in the White Mountains, 1886

The Presidential Range is part of the White Mountains in New Hampshire. It is picturesque because it contains the highest peaks of the White Mountains, but also has some of the worst weather on Earth, due to high wind speeds and whiteout conditions. Because its weather is so unpredictable and dangerous, mountaineers use the Presidential Range to train for higher peaks, like K2 and Everest.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



Mount Washington Summit View,
circa 1844–1900

If you are on the top of Mount Washington, which is 6,288 feet high, you are frequently above the clouds since it is so high. This photo has two images because it is a stereoscope card. When viewed through a special lens, called a stereoscope, the two images would look like a single 3-D image.

Source: New Hampshire Historical Society



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Name _____ Answer Key _____

Reasons to Visit New Hampshire

Directions: As you encounter and investigate the images around the classroom, add them to one or more of the categories.

Isles of Shoals: Nine small islands off the shore of NH and ME. Fishing and vacation spot for centuries.	Old Man of the Mountain: Chain of cliffs that appeared to look like a face in profile. Fell in May 2003, important symbol of NH.	Flume: Natural gorge and waterfall at base of Mt. Liberty, 800 feet long.	Pine Island Park: Amusement park in Manchester, NH, from early 1900s. Included rides, food, and swan pond.
Lake Winnepesaukee: Largest lake in NH, length about 21 miles in total. Popular tourist area with hiking, boating, fishing, dining, and art.	Cog Railway: Cog railway that climbs Mt. Washington, second steepest railroad in the world, started 1868.	Mount Washington & Presidential Range: 19-mile section of the White Mountains in northern NH. Includes 13 peaks in total named after American presidents and public figures. Mt. Washington is the highest mountain in northeastern United States. 6288 feet high with extreme weather at top.	

Natural Beauty	Amusement	Activity (ex. hiking, skiing, camping)	Education/History	Relaxation
Isles of Shoals Flume Cog Railway Mount Washington Old Man of the Mountain Lake Winnepesaukee Presidential Range	Isles of Shoals Cog Railway Pine Island	Flume Mount Washington Lake Winnepesaukee Presidential Range	Isles of Shoals Cog Railway	Isles of Shoals Lake Winnepesaukee



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Reflection

1. What about New Hampshire attracts tourists from all over the United States? Give two examples from the activity to back up your reasoning.

Possible response:

New Hampshire attracts tourists from all over the United States due to the natural beauty of its landscape, and the many activities that visitors can participate in. For example, the Flume is gorge is 800 feet long and can be seen by visitors who wish to hike along the trail surrounding the gorge. People who don't enjoy long walks can still explore the natural beauty of New Hampshire by taking a trip up Mount Washington on the Cog Railway.

Additional responses: If visitors prefer the water, Lake Winnepesaukee is a great place to visit for fishing, boating, and other enjoyable activities. The Isles of Shoals are a group of islands that can be visited by ferry for those who enjoy the seacoast.

2. Do you think the main attractions of New Hampshire change over time? Why or why not?

Possible response:

Attractions in New Hampshire change over time due to the natural evolution of nature and its landscape. For instance, the Old Man of the Mountain fell due to natural erosion on the cliffs of Cannon Mountain in 2003, although it still remains an important symbol of New Hampshire. Some attractions can grow due to the interest of the tourists, but they can also close down, such as the rollercoasters and other attractions of Pine Island Park in Manchester, NH. Even others continue to develop as time goes on, like the activities and attractions at Lake Winnepesaukee.

